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Chairman: Mr. Mbayu (Vice-Chairman) ..... (Cameroon)
later: Mr. Djumala (Vice-Chairman) ..... (Indonesia)

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In the absence of Mr. Seixas da Costa (Portugal), Mr. Mbayu (Cameroon), Vice-Chairman, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 3.10 p.m.

Agenda item 95: Macroeconomic policy questions (*continued*)

(c) Science and technology for development (*continued*) (A/C.2/56/L.2)

Introduction of draft resolution A/C.2/56/L.2

1. **Mr. Mirafzal** (Islamic Republic of Iran) introduced draft resolution A/C.2/56/L.2 on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

2. *Mr. Djumala (Indonesia), Vice-Chairman, took the Chair.*

Agenda item 103: Implementation of the first United Nations Decade for the Eradication of Poverty (1997-2006) (*continued*) (A/56/222-S/2001/736, A/56/229 and Add.1, A/56/260, A/56/306)

3. **Mr. Mejdoub** (Tunisia) endorsed the statement made at the previous meeting by the representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran on behalf of the Group of 77 and China and recalled that the Heads of State and Government had decided at the Millennium Summit to make the eradication of poverty one of their priority areas of action. They had also reaffirmed their commitment to halve, by the year 2015, the proportion of the world's population living in poverty. However, the Secretary-General indicated in his report (A/56/229) that it would not be easy to achieve that goal. Various studies predicted that only a few countries were likely to achieve it and that many countries, particularly those in sub-Saharan Africa, must improve their growth performance over that recorded in the previous decade if they were to make progress in the fight against poverty.

4. His delegation recognized that it was up to developing countries not only to promote good governance, sound macroeconomic management, and cooperation with a dynamic private sector and civil society but also to ensure that poverty eradication objectives were included in national socio-economic development strategies. For its part, Tunisia had managed to strike a balance between the requirements of economic development and social development and had made promising strides with respect to economic growth, per capita income, poverty reduction, school enrolment and reduction in unemployment.

5. He agreed with the Secretary-General that only through cooperation and partnership could a better future be achieved for mankind. The international community should assist developing countries to implement poverty reduction strategies; provide rapid and lasting debt relief to those countries, including middle-income countries; improve the market access for the agricultural and manufactured exports from developing countries; eliminate export subsidies; establish a stable and well managed trade and financial system; and reverse the declining trend in official development assistance so that developed countries could achieve the target of 0.7 per cent of their gross national product for overall ODA.

6. Tunisia's endorsement of the establishment of a world solidarity fund was based on its own experience and on the results achieved by the national solidarity fund. The world solidarity fund would be financed through voluntary contributions from individuals, the private sector, associations, institutions, governments and any other sources. The voluntary contributions could be deposited into a trust fund administered by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). In-kind contributions could consist of goods and services, work and expertise. In each country, the world solidarity fund's resources would be used within the framework of ongoing policies, strategies and activities at the national level, while taking into account international and local experiences in that regard. The fund's interventions could aim at improving the living conditions of the people and creating and strengthening income-generating activities through the financing of micro projects in the agriculture, handicrafts and cottage industry sectors, paying particular attention to the female population. The fund's work would be carried out in conjunction with other programmes and funds of the United Nations and it would be entrusted to governmental and non-governmental development organizations.

7. **Mr. Mainali** (Nepal) said that his delegation associated itself with the statement made by the representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran on behalf of the Group of 77 and China. Poverty eradication was the main plank of the Millennium Declaration, and increased global solidarity and cooperation would be vital to the achievement of that goal. Nepal's

experience had shown that resource constraints were the key impediment to reducing poverty in the developing countries; to their dismay, however, global targets for official development assistance remained unmet, and flows of such assistance continued to decline. Debt was eating up most of the export earnings of developing countries, and the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) Initiative continued to stumble for lack of resources and speed. Private sector capacities were limited and foreign investment flows were virtually non-existent; trade remained biased in favour of a wealthy few and globalization had marginalized the weakest countries.

8. Nepal was in favour of establishing a world solidarity fund for poverty eradication, as agreed at the South Summit, and called on development partners in the North to contribute to the fund generously and those in the South to make contributions to the best of their capacity. His Government appreciated the European Union's initiative in offering to host the Third United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries and its "everything but arms" scheme to stimulate the least developed countries' trade and their integration into the global economy.

9. Landlocked developing countries needed special attention from the global community in order to develop their transit and transport infrastructure; promote their agriculture so as to address their food and nutritional deficiency — which was caused by not having access to resources from the sea — and encourage high-value low-volume industries so as to offset their geographical remoteness from the corridors of international trade. Nepal was implementing a poverty eradication strategy as the only objective of its ninth five-year plan. Resource constraints and a volatile external environment were the principal challenges the country faced. His delegation urged the international community to help Nepal in its efforts and hoped that a reliable blueprint for mobilizing resources for development would be drawn up at the International Conference on Financing for Development.

10. **Mr. Salazar** (Peru) said that he endorsed the statement made by the representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran on behalf of the Group of 77 and China. Poverty brought with it not only hunger, but also ignorance, disease, lack of opportunities, inability to protect the rights of the individual, loss of hope and violence. Poverty reduction, which represented one of the greatest challenges of the twenty-first century, would be a more viable undertaking if civil society and the large national and multinational corporations joined in that effort. Despite the efforts of organizations such as the United Nations, the international community had yet to come up with an effective and definitive response to the problem.

11. Under the present circumstances, with every problem taking on global proportions, poverty was no longer someone else's problem; it affected everyone. Hence, if stability was the goal, there was no alternative but for each individual to make sure that his or her neighbours also enjoyed stability.

12. In Peru, almost 50 per cent of the population lived in poverty; 20 per cent lived in extreme poverty. In order to address that phenomenon, the country must assume responsibility for putting in place the necessary conditions domestically, but to do so it must have financial resources from the international market; official development assistance played an extremely important role in that regard. His delegation would welcome a world solidarity fund financed with voluntary contributions from governments, international organizations, foundations and the private sector, with the funds obtained being allocated according to the depth of poverty in each country. However, it must be borne in mind that in order for economies to grow and for nations to make progress, they must be able to compete on the international market on an equal footing and in an open, transparent, adequately regulated and predictable financial environment. Making such a system a reality would be the central mission of the International Conference on Financing for Development to be held in Monterrey.

13. **Mr. Valera** (Mexico) said that poverty eradication was without a doubt the greatest economic, political, humanitarian and moral challenge of the times, inasmuch as it gave rise to collateral problems such as the destruction of the environment, contagious diseases, illegal immigration, insecurity, fanaticism and terrorism.

14. Mexico was determined to redouble its efforts to achieve the goals set forth in the Millennium Declaration in the fields of education, health, employment and equality. To that end, it had adopted policies and programmes that emphasized human development as one of the main vehicles for individuals, families and communities to improve their capacities and take advantage of every available

opportunity to raise their living standards. In 2001, three sectoral programmes — the national programme to overcome poverty and marginalization, the national urban development and land management programme and the national housing programme — had made it possible for over 6.4 million families, totalling 27 million persons, to receive direct support in their efforts to address and overcome poverty. Special mention should be made of the education, health and food programme (PROGRESA), which was designed to provide support to families living in extreme poverty. That programme reached 53,000 communities and served 2.5 million families. The beneficiaries, especially women and girls, had experienced improvements in their nutrition and their access to health services. Participation in primary and secondary education had increased, and the programme would be extended in 2002 to high school. Legislators from different political parties, as well as government officials, academics and representatives of civil society were all in agreement as to the need for a suitable legal framework to facilitate the formulation, implementation, evaluation and institutionalization of public policy on social issues that would also provide a framework for the participation of the social and private sectors.

15. Although it was up to individual countries to pursue their own poverty eradication programmes, they needed the cooperation of the United Nations in addressing that gigantic challenge. It was to be hoped that the International Conference on Financing for Development and the World Summit on Sustainable Development, to be held in 2002 in Monterrey and in Johannesburg, would contribute towards the building of a more just and equitable world, a more humane world with equal opportunities for all.

16. **Mr. Nguma** (United Republic of Tanzania) said that his delegation associated itself with the statement made by the Islamic Republic of Iran on behalf of the Group of 77 and China. It was unacceptable that such a level of poverty was allowed to prevail when the world was not short of the resources and capacity to eradicate it. There was a direct link between globalization and poverty. The external debt burden, inadequate resource flows, both in terms of ODA and foreign direct investment, weak commodity prices, the vagaries of nature and, in some cases, continued armed conflict, perpetuated poverty in the developing countries, which continued to be marginalized in the globalization process. Poverty could not be eradicated nor could the target of halving the number of people living in poverty by the year 2015 be attained without addressing those problems and assisting those countries to become fully integrated into the world economy. It was the duty of the international community to provide a conducive environment that would help to meet the basic needs of humankind. One way of doing so was to help to achieve the economic development of developing countries.

17. Although various initiatives had been taken in recent years to reduce poverty, the situation had not changed for the better. While the most important component in the war against poverty was ODA, developing countries needed a type of aid that would increasingly enhance capacity for ownership of the development process and which would generate self-reliance. Among other things, they needed aid to help develop an attractive climate for private sector investment. In that regard, his delegation supported the proposal to establish a world solidarity fund for poverty eradication which would complement the support currently received by developing countries. The problem of the external debt, which constituted a major obstacle to the implementation of poverty reduction programmes, also needed to be addressed.

18. His country had begun to implement various poverty reduction measures since it attained independence in 1961. Beginning in 1966, the Government had started preparing the National Vision aimed at eradicating poverty in the country by the year 2025. In that context, in June 1998, the National Poverty Eradication Strategy had been adopted. The principal goal of that Strategy was to prepare a conducive environment that would enable the country to reduce by half the number of Tanzanians living in poverty by the year 2010, with the ultimate goal of completely wiping out poverty by the year 2025. Furthermore, his Government, in collaboration with its development partners, had concluded the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper which would allow the country to gain access to HIPC funds to finance development activities aimed at poverty reduction.

19. He concluded by quoting from a statement made by the President of the United Republic of Tanzania before the General Assembly in 1999: "These are challenging times, especially for developing countries. Yet I believe there is a ray of hope for building the foundations of a more equitable and dynamic system of

international development cooperation ... As we enter the new millennium, I wish to reiterate our firm commitment to cooperate with others in achieving the goals of the United Nations, particularly those relating to the promotion of economic development and prosperity."

20. **Mr. Lee** Kyung-chul (Republic of Korea) said that in the current era of globalization, the persisting imbalances in economic and social growth among regions, and among and within countries, remained a source of concern for the international community. The Millennium Summit had provided considerable impetus towards the achievement of the ultimate goal of the First Decade for the Eradication of Poverty — halving by the year 2015 the proportion of people living in extreme poverty. However, as the international community entered the second half of the Decade, it found itself at a crossroads. Achievements in terms of global poverty reduction had not been satisfactory. In particular, his delegation was greatly concerned about the economic situation in much of sub-Saharan Africa, where the number of people living in poverty had increased in both absolute and relative terms. On the other hand, some encouraging trends towards higher standards of living had been noted in other parts of the developing world, with modest but positive progress in such areas as nutrition, access to clean water, primary education and gender equality. Regional, strategically-designed approaches to development, such as the recent New African Initiative, deserved special attention and support. The financing for development process provided a unique opportunity to map out globally committed strategies for development at a high political level. There was no shortage of ideas in the field of development. Such ideas could best be discussed, put into practice and prioritized in the overall context of financing for development.

21. **Ms. Siddharth** (International Labour Organization) noted with satisfaction that the Secretary-General's report recognized the consistency between the "decent work" approach of the International Labour Organization (ILO) and the multifaceted character of poverty. In the midst of the uncertainties that globalization had brought, what people wanted was work. Work that met the needs of families in regard to safety, education and income security after retirement. Work in which they were treated decently and their basic rights were respected. That was what "decent work" was about. Translating that concept into a policy framework for poverty reduction required attention to the four components of the concept, namely employment; labour standards, especially the fundamental principles and rights at work; social protection and social dialogue. The work of ILO in the field of employment was aimed at strengthening the efforts of its Member States in optimal utilization of that instrument of poverty reduction. The country-level approach enabled ILO to identify the strengths and weaknesses of employment policies adopted by various countries and to draw useful lessons to be shared through a number of forums and consultations at the regional and international levels. Work focusing on specific groups, such as youth and women, continued to be an important component of its employment-promotion activities.

22. The Jobs for Africa programme was a special ILO job-creation initiative aimed at reducing poverty, the basic approach of which was to influence investment so as to promote employment-intensive, pro-poor growth. Employment for poverty reduction was an objective in both macroeconomic and sectoral policies, as well as in interventions at the micro level. That involved integrating the employment objective into the poverty reduction strategy papers which were part of the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) Debt Initiative. Strengthening national capacity to undertake those tasks was also an important component of that major ILO programme, which was currently being implemented in 16 countries of Africa.

23. In order to respond to crises of various types which exacerbated the problem of poverty, ILO had recently put in place a programme to provide support in formulating and implementing reconstruction programmes focusing on employment and livelihoods. For instance, in Mozambique the Organization's efforts were directed at supporting the social and economic reintegration of the uprooted population, rehabilitation of basic services, improvement of accessibility to the damaged area, productive infrastructure reconstruction and offering new options for decent jobs. In terms of practical approaches to job creation, ILO remained active in a number of fields, including micro- and small-enterprise development, promotion of cooperatives, application of labour-based approaches in infrastructure, microfinance and skill development for enhancing employability.

24. Since the mid-1970s, ILO had provided technical assistance to developing countries and countries in

transition in designing and implementing skills-training programmes for populations living in poverty and social exclusion. It had developed a participatory approach to skills development which had been applied extensively in technical assistance programmes, especially in Asia, Africa, central and eastern Europe and central Asia. The capacity-building programme on gender, poverty and employment focused on awareness-raising and provided practical support through training and pilot actions relating to the interface between gender, poverty reduction and employment promotion.

25. The ILO Constitution of 1919 stated that universal and lasting peace could be established only if it was based upon social justice. The 1944 Declaration of Philadelphia acknowledged that poverty anywhere constituted a danger to prosperity everywhere and stated that all human beings, irrespective of race, creed or sex, had the right to pursue both their material well-being and their spiritual development in conditions of freedom and dignity, of economic security and equal opportunity. In conclusion, she said that ILO remained committed to the success of the United Nations Decade for the Eradication of Poverty, and a large number of its activities were geared towards contributing to that objective.

26. **Mr. Hamad** (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)) recalled that in paragraph 17 of resolution 55/210, concerning implementation of the first United Nations Decade for the Eradication of Poverty, the General Assembly had emphasized the critical role of education, particularly basic education and training, in particular for girls, in the empowerment of those living in poverty. The Director-General of UNESCO was focusing much of his attention on the follow-up to the Dakar Framework for Action with a view, first, to maintaining and enhancing the high political commitment to the Education for All initiative internationally, regionally and nationally and, second, to mobilizing international financial support for that initiative, including through innovative and non-conventional channels such as debt relief and strengthening the role of the corporate sector. Without a massive investment in education by both donor and recipient countries of official development assistance and other forms of assistance, the international community would be unable to achieve the targets set in the Dakar Framework for Action. The General Assembly should encourage the donor community to consider education as the safest investment in the fight against extreme poverty. Addressing the ministerial review meeting of the nine high-population countries, the Director-General had observed that investment in basic education produced high rates of return, since basic education contributed decisively to improving a community's quality of life, and that a nation could not hope to sustain economic growth and alleviate poverty without a literate and numerate population.

27. At the initiative of the Director-General of UNESCO, a meeting of a high-level group on Education For All (EFA) would be held at UNESCO headquarters on 29 and 30 October 2001. He hoped that such gatherings would, in time, help to mobilize sufficient resources to meet the real needs of EFA.

28. At its 161st session in May 2001, the Executive Board of UNESCO had adopted a strategy for the cross-cutting theme: eradication of poverty, especially extreme poverty, designed to broaden the focus of international and national poverty reduction strategies through the mainstreaming of education, culture, the sciences and communication. The Management of Social Transformation Programme was responsible for coordinating the implementation of that strategy. He encouraged the Committee to bear the strategy in mind when it considered the outcome of its discussions on agenda item 103.

29. **Mr. Ragab** (Egypt), expressing his support for the statement made by the representative of the Islamic Republic of Iran on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, said that the Committee should pay particular attention to the eradication of poverty and that the international community should focus its efforts on the same objective. The successive financial crises of recent years were compelling evidence of the need to find solutions to the problems resulting from globalization. To that end, the developed world and the developing countries must work together with a shared vision of the future. All the issues relating to economic development needed to be looked at together in a single forum designed for that purpose, in order to establish a much-needed comprehensive system for the eradication of poverty.

30. In the midst of a phenomenal industrial revolution and over 50 years after the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, it was unacceptable for some countries to fail to live up to

their commitment to reduce poverty. He hoped that other donor countries would increase their official development assistance as the Nordic countries had done, and he thanked the Nordic countries for the solidarity they had shown towards developing countries. Current official development assistance levels were lower than they had been for many years. The international community could not claim to be making serious efforts to eradicate poverty while financial flows to most developing countries became scarcer every day. It was impossible to combat poverty without dealing comprehensively with the issue of technology transfer, and without revising trade-related aspects of intellectual property practices that restricted the capacity of developing countries to benefit from technological progress.

31. Poverty was directly linked to the international economic order resulting from globalization. There was an inherent imbalance in the system governing international economic relations, particularly in the inability of the developing countries to participate effectively in high-level decision-making structures. The international economic order was insensitive to the situation of poverty-stricken countries. Consequently, it would be inappropriate to insist only on domestic reforms in developing countries to deal with economic issues in a more effective manner, without addressing the imbalances that remained in the international economic order. In Egypt's view, it was essential for the United Nations to pay special attention to the poverty-related problems facing the least developed countries, particularly African countries, which found it impossible to improve living conditions owing to foreign debt, a shortage of resources allocated to official development assistance, the collapse in commodity prices and infrastructure deficiencies.

32. **The Chairman** said that that concluded the general debate on agenda item 103.

The meeting rose at 4.30 p.m.